MATEO FERREIRA

MR. FERREIRA: Okay. My name is Mateo Ferreira. I work here in Las Vegas and also I work and live in Tecopa, California, which is right on the border of Death Valley.

1 I've heard a lot of people come up here and be really polite and thank you and I'm -- I'm here to say I'm really a ashamed of what the Department of Energy has done to this land here and I think you should be ashamed to even bring this document forward. I know that that's an emotion, but it's something that we should all have when we do something wrong. What you're doing is wrong here, absolutely wrong.

2 Outside a little bit earlier, I got to meet some of the union workers that came down in white hats on and white T-shirts, and I think they have valid concerns, you know. They want -- if it's going to be built, they want it to be built with union labor. The problem is once you're done with them, you dispose of them like what you call your waste. Humans are not to dispose of. They're not factoids to put into your programs or human beings. Everybody here knows that you're building Yucca Mountain. You're not testing it. You put the tunnel in there the size that you want it to begin with, the largest boring machine on earth. You are in process -- you are not offering any alternatives that's been spoken on here today quite a bit. You're not looking at the human factor at all.

3 Just the other day I was working with some ranchers out of Amargosa Valley that came out to help us out with our well. They farm a thousand acres of hay. Part of their hay is organic hay that they feed the cows there. There's organic dairy there. They -- this one guy's talking about he started there when I was 15 years old. Now he's in his 60s. They turned that land into a place, you know, it was there, people use used those springs for thousands and thousands of years before, maybe millions of years before, and now they're growing food for people there. They just want a chance to live, you know, but you just discounted them, you throw them away, and there's some government officials that we hear from, too, that say they want to be compensated. Well, you can't compensate when you destroy a piece of this earth.

Your twelve mile boundary lines go right through Amargosa. Those are human people, and I work down here at the Federal Courthouse doing groundwater remediation work, and I see that, you know, we're just people trying to get by, trying to make a living, want to go out here and see Yucca Mountain go through because it's going to mean a good paycheck for the next five or ten years, but they don't -- we're not looking at after that point.

4 When these casks start rolling in -- I've been at your meetings where you haven't had the audacity to pull it out today, but fake spent fuel rods, parading around like look, this is a spent fuel rod, totally safe, totally nice, but it's been in water. Anybody here who has ever taken out a hot water heater knows that you get corrosion around your elements. There's a lot of -- of minerals and so on that's attached itself to those fuel rods that is also highly radioactive.

5 You take those rods in Massachusetts, say, you pull those rods out of the reactors and you put them in your cooling ponds. Now you take them out of the cooling ponds and you put them into these casks. When -- they've already had problems when they're transferring from the liquid to the dry casks in Michigan, for example, I heard about it. I'm not a scientist, I'm a working person, but I know that mistakes happen all the time. Otherwise my hands wouldn't be smashed up like they are.

6... You know, we're humans. We saw it over in Japan. Human beings maker errors. You have not counted that factor into your DEIS and you need to factor that in way, way more. Take the note of that because I really appreciate that you would do that and think about it. I mean, for example, right here, there's like fifty people outside couldn't get into your room. Come on. You know, maybe that's scientific calculations as far

6 cont as how many square inches a human being occupied took, but it's a factor. I'm a hu -- I'm not blaming you as a person. I'm saying humans make mistakes.

7 So now they got that waste casks that are superbly designed with those huge dumbbell things. I heard the scientist working on it say, "Well, three-quarters of it is protection." It weighs 80,000 tons, the maximum amount that you can put on the highway. You would have liked to wrap it in tons and tons of lead so you could have protected us, but then you'd have to build special highways for it. You can't protect us from it and you know it. So you've done, you know, the best you can. Good job. You did the best you can, but it don't work.

8 So those rods are hanging in the air on the cranes. They got what they call hot cells. That's very dangerous work. They're lowering it into the dry casks. One of those welds could be wrong. Who knows what's going to happen? We're not talking about one time, five times. We're talking about 30,000 shipments. Nobody
14 talks about how many rods that is. Then you bounce them across our highways all the way out to here. All that corrosion's falling off of the casks. 750 degrees, thousands of times background radiation emitting off of these things.

9 I haven't really studied the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the thick one. I just read the summary, but first responders? This place should be filled with ambulance and policemen. When I talk to them about it, because I drive that nuclear waste cask around in my time when I can, I talk to first responders a lot, and they say they're trained. If they hear there's a nuclear accident, they turn their lights on, head home, get their family and go. Because that's the only response.

Just the other day, I just saw an e-mail about it. Somebody gave me a piece of paper with it on there. I think it was Judy. Just saw it, but they had a fire over in Michigan and they're putting out the fire. Oh, what's on them barrels? Oh, radioactive signs, biohazard. We better find out what's up with that.

MR. LAWSON: Thirty seconds, please.

MR. FERREIRA: Yeah. So then the casks arrive at the test site. Because they're going to start shipping them here. Murkowski, Senator Murkowski from Alaska, I want to go visit him sometime. Every year, we had to beat this bill back down. It takes millions dollars in resources and our senator's threatening to
10 filibuster, you know, and yeah. President Clinton, he comes out and says, "Well, I oppose that until we know Yucca Mountain's safe." Well, until we know it's safe. You're going to analyze this thing until you know it's safe. But they're -- as soon as you give them a yellow light, they'll start shipping it to the test site, parking it above ground, we'll have these casks just sitting there.

11 Then we got to pull them rods back out. What -- what the engineer tell me today? They call it a hot cell. Those rods come back out. All that dust and stuff dealt with? Put those rods into the new casks and roll them down inside that mountain. All computerized, because no human being could ever go into that mountain once we start putting waste in there. Everything's going to work perfectly. 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 times it's going to work like clockwork. Those casks are going to go down inside of that mountain. It's a feat, greater than the pyramids, you say. We're going to do this. We're going to -- we're going to be so amazing. Boy, 250,000 years from now, they're going to look back at us and say, "What morons, what idiots. How could they have done this to us?"

MR. LAWSON: I'm going to ask you to finish up, or if you'd like to come back after everyone else has spoken to say --

MR. FERREIRA: I'll be coming back.

MR. LAWSON: Okay.

12 MR. FERREIRA: So that's pretty much it, you know, and -- oh, one more point. The casks, the lines, the cords, the gloves that you'll be using out there to handle this stuff, that's all nuclear waste then, too. Does that stay in Nevada or does that go? You could address all the nuclear waste you're going to create. If you
13 didn't move it, you'd create a lot less nuclear waste. So maybe you could address that but don't come back with another environmental statement. Come back and say, "We put out the idea. We've really looked into it and it doesn't work." Thank you.